

REMARKS

Claim 2 has been amended. Claim 1 has been withdrawn. Claim 21 has been added. Thus, claims 1-9, and 11-21 are pending in the application. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested based on the following remarks.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 2-9, 12-17 and 19 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Li* (6009830).

Li teaches injecting a chemically inactive carrier gas from a gas shower head and an etchant gas from one or more lower ports located below the shower head at the same time. No where does *Li* disclose time multiplexing or time modulation where the same gas flow is switched on at a first location and switched off at a second location (and vice versa). That is, *Li* is completely silent to "... continuously switching between ...outputting the plasma forming component into the first processing zone of the process chamber without outputting the plasma forming component into the second processing zone of the process chamber; and outputting the plasma forming component into the second processing zone of the process chamber without outputting the plasma forming component into the first processing zone of the process chamber, " as required by claim 2 (and its dependents). Accordingly, the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

Also in contrast to *Li*, claim 15 specifically requires, "...alternately distributing the received plasma forming component between two different regions of the process chamber..." Again, *Li* is completely silent to time multiplexing such as continuously alternating a gas flow between two locations. *Li* also provides no motivation to perform such a routine as *Li* only teaches supplying a first gas to a bottom gas feed and a second gas to a top gas feed. As stated in *Li*, "In the preferred embodiment, as shown in Fig. 2, the processing gas consists of an etchant gas, for example, C₄F₈, and a carrier gas of argon supplied from respective sources 64, 66 (Col. 5, lines 4-7)." See also Col. 4, lines 44-48. Accordingly, the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

Claims 11 and 18-20 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Li in view of Shan (6113731).

Shan does not overcome the deficiencies of *Li*. Both references fail to teach or suggest time multiplexing as embodied in the independent claims. Accordingly, the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

New Claim

In contrast to both references, claim 21 specifically requires, "...via time multiplexing, selectively switching the delivery of the plasma forming components back and forth between a first delivery condition where the plasma forming components are only delivered to an inner region of the process chamber, and a second delivery condition where the plasma forming components are only delivered to an outer region of the process chamber ..." Accordingly the rejection is unsupported by the art and should be withdrawn.

Conclusion

The applicant believes that all pending claims are allowable and respectfully requests a Notice of Allowance for this application from the Examiner. Should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference would expedite the prosecution of this application, the undersigned can be reached at the telephone number set out below.

Respectfully submitted,
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